

East Bay

Journal

Obituaries	2, 4
Regional Report	3
LEGAL ADS	5
CLASSIFIED	6

\$400,000 grant surprises town officials

Bird sanctuary applied for money to buy land on neighboring estate

By STEPHEN HEFFNER
Journal-Bulletin Staff Writer

MIDDLETOWN — The state has awarded \$400,000 to the town for the possible purchase of conservation easements and open land on the 10-acre Gray Craig estate for the benefit of the neighboring Norman Bird Sanctuary, Governor DiPrete's office announced yesterday.

But the grant surprised town officials, who said they weren't aware of any application for the money. Barry Murphy, a member of the sanctuary's advisory committee also was surprised. He said the sanctuary applied for the grant three months ago, but expected the mon-

MIDDLETOWN

ey to be given to the sanctuary, not to the town.

No one was available for comment in the governor's office.

Town Administrator Charles Roberts, Town Council President Philip Coen, and Councilman Peter Grimes, chairman of the town's open space committee, all said the grant was news to them.

"It's a complete surprise to me," said Coen. "I knew we were involved with a group from the sanctuary that was hoping to do something with Gray Craig. We talked about how the town could never pay for the whole thing and about where we would get other monies, and that was way it was left. We never said anything that, yes, some-

body would put in for so much money."

Murphy said an application was made as the sanctuary negotiated for about 35 acres from a group of developers, led by Robert Kempenaar, who own Gray Craig. Kempenaar's group bought the former Van Beuren estate three years ago for \$3.5 million, and they proposed a 56-unit condominium development on the property.

The sanctuary objected to the proposal, saying it would adversely affect bird habitats, and supporters began to look for ways to preserve the estate.

Last spring, Massachusetts investor Charles Dana offered to buy the main house and 26 acres of the estate in a deal that is scheduled to close today. Dana said yesterday that he also began working with the

sanctuary and Kempenaar to reduce the number of units on the property and to allow the sanctuary to buy conservation easements and part of the land.

The price, according to Dana, is \$1.15 million. Murphy said that the sanctuary is hoping that the town can contribute a portion of the cost and that the remainder can be raised through foundation grants and private donations.

While noting that voters last year authorized a \$1 million bond issue for buying open land, Coen cautioned that the town could not use the money at Gray Craig without retaining ownership of whatever was purchased.

"If the town came up with money, we would have to have control of what we paid for," said Coen.

Wharf decision a loss for watchdog

State agency OKs waterfront condo, marina project

By KARIMA A. HAYNES
Journal-Bulletin Staff Writer

NEWPORT — In the long battle over waterfront development, perhaps no individual has spoken more forcefully in favor of preserving public access to the water than Mary Ferrazzoli.

For the past seven years, Ferrazzoli has been a fixture at Newport

Lawyer: